

HOUSE BILL 982

By Gillespie

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1 and Title 49, Chapter 6, relative to adverse childhood experiences.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-1-230, is amended by adding the following as new subsections:

(d) A local board of education shall adopt a policy and develop plans to provide mental and behavioral health services to students with ACEs. As part of the policy, each LEA shall annually conduct at least one (1) ACEs training seminar for parents and community-based health providers.

(e)

(1) If an LEA school employee finds that a student has four (4) or more ACEs, the employee shall report the finding to the school principal or school counselor. Nothing in this subsection (e) prevents or absolves an employee who has knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect that a student is a victim of child abuse or child sexual abuse from acting in accordance with the reporting requirements of §§ 37-1-403, 37-1-605, or 49-6-1601.

(2) The school principal or the school counselor shall confer with the student's parents and refer the student to a school mental health counselor.

(3) If the school principal or school counselor fails to refer a student as required by subdivision (e)(2) within ten (10) days of the initial report, the director of schools or the director's designee shall, within twenty-five (25) days of the initial report, refer the student to a community-based behavioral health provider.

(4) Subdivisions (e)(2) and (e)(3) do not apply if the school principal, school counselor, director of schools, or the director's designee are not able to obtain parental consent for the referral.

(f) For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Parent" means the parent, guardian, person who has custody of the child, or individual who has caregiving authority under § 49-6-3001; and

(2) "School mental health counselor" means any person listed in § 49-2-124(c)(1)-(9) who may perform an evaluation for psychiatric diagnosis or treatment.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2021, the public welfare requiring it.